(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the Government have decided to grant permission to hire out Channel-III of Doordarshan to foreign companies;

(f) if so, the reason therefor; and

(g) the extent to which the steps of the Government are likely to affect the other Channels of Doordarshan?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

(e) DD-3 Channel of Doordarshan has been closed down with effect from 16-01-1998.

(f) and (g) Do not arise.

[English]

Curtailment of Powers of TRA

821. SHRI N.K. PREMCHANDRAN : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have any proposal to curtail the powers of Telecom. Regulatory Authority; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Telephone Exchanges in M.P.

822. SHRI FAGGAN SINGH KULESTE : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of telephone exchanges functioning and proposed to be set up in Madhya Pradesh particularly in Mandala district; and

(b) the time by which these exchanges are likely to be set up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) and (b) the number of telephone exchanges in Madhya Pradesh and Mandla district is as below :

Madhya Pradesh — 3119

Mandla District — 37

The new exchanges are opened as per the existing norms where registered demand exceeds 10. Wherever this condition is met, Exchange is planned and provided expeditiously.

Contact Classes in Hindi

823. SHRI JAGDAMBI PRASAD YADAV : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether contact classes for B.C.A./M.C.A. courses in Hindi medium are organised in English medium by Indira Gandhi National Open University, Regional Office, Delhi; and

(b) if so, whether the Government propose to organise contact classes in Hindi medium from this very session for those who tend to undertake correspondence course in the Hindi medium?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI) : (a) and (b) According to the information furnished by the Indira Gandhi National Open University, the Bachelor of Computer Applications (B.C.A.) and the Master's in Computer Applications (M.C.A.) programmes are at present offered by the University through the medium of English. However, the University is exploring the possibility of offering these programmes through the medium of Hindi also.

[English]

Smuggling of Animal Skins

824. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of cases of seizures of animal skins and hides reported in the country during the last three years;

(b) whether such seizures of skins and hides finds their way in Kashmir where their sale is unchecked;

(c) whether any action plan has been worked to check the same; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI) : (a) The number of cases of seizures of animal skins and hides detected by Regional Offices of Wildlife Preservation of Government of India during the last three years i.e. 1995-98 are as follows :

Centre	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Delhi	9	6	5
Calcutta	2	3	26
Chennai	4	1	1
Mumbai	7	5	4